



ELITE

Personal Training and Fitness Solutions

HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

8/28 - Protein Bars

Introduction

Protein bars are a convenient way to add more protein and other nutrients to your diet. However, not all protein bars are created equal. Some protein bars are so high in calories and added sugar that they may as well be in the candy aisle. However, others may be an appropriate choice to fuel your workout or stabilize your blood sugar throughout the day. This week's focus is protein bars...what they are, why there are so many, and how to choose a good one. Marketing and misinformation abound. Let EPT help!

Countless protein bar options are available today. It can be daunting to select the one that is best for you. Let us help.



Background

If you saw our April 3rd topic "The Scoop on Protein Shakes and Powders", the cautions are the same for protein bars. We do not typically recommend processed products, but the convenience of this popular form of protein supplementation can't be ignored. That's why we offer protein bars in our Snack Station. Be assured that we continuously research high-quality options, just as we do for supplements and exercise.

What are protein bars?

Protein bars are nutrition bars that may contain a high proportion of protein to carbohydrates/fats. They are targeted to people who want a convenient source of protein that does not require preparation. Not all nutrition bars are the same, so take these classifications with a grain of salt:

- **Energy bars** provide the majority of their food energy (calories) in carbohydrate form.
- **Meal replacement bars** claim to replace some of the nutrients in a full meal. They tend to be larger than other bars, with proportionately higher levels of carbohydrates, fats, and protein.
- **Protein bars** may be lower in carbohydrates than energy bars, lower in vitamins and dietary minerals than meal replacement bars, and higher in protein than the other bars.



Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at Eliteptf.com for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

Protein content claims like "good source of protein" are regulated by the FDA.



Claim	Must Contain
High	>20% DV per RACC
Good Source	10-19% DV per RACC
More protein than X	>10% more DV per RACC

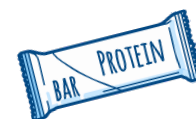


*DV = Daily Value

RACC = Reference Amount Customarily Consumed

Does this seem helpful? We didn't think so...

Daily Value and Reference Amount Customarily Consumed are arbitrary consumption standards of unknown origin. Neither is a good indicator for protein needed. The amount of protein varies depending on factors such as age, exercise and medications. We could go down the rabbit hole with the FDA, but we'll save that for our newsletter series.



Why are there so many protein bars out there? Here are 3 good reasons:

1. Consumers appreciate convenience. There's no sticky blender to clean. Protein bars are compact, so they easily fit into a pocket or gym bag. What could be easier?



2. Protein bars are cheap and easy to make, have high profit margins, and can be packed full of any new ingredient that's creating a buzz. They also have a long shelf life with low risk of foodborne illness or spoilage.

3. The global protein bar market is good business. It was valued at \$4.5 billion in 2021 and is expected to exceed \$7 Billion by 2030. Both small and large businesses have jumped on the protein band wagon. Large food corporations are even creating new sub-brands to mimic small brands and hide their true source due to mounting consumer mistrust of large food corporations.



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How do I choose a good protein bar?

Ask us! For our selections in the gym, we research the ingredients and compare the protein, fat and sugar content in various brands before making a purchase. If you are making your shopping list, please follow the EPT principles from our 6/26 Snacking topic:



- **PLAN**

- Failing to plan is planning to fail. Research what you need to buy. Make a list and don't deviate from it.

- **PORTION**

- Like nut mixes, bars tend to be calorie dense. Because they are easy to eat, it's easy to eat too many.
- Watch portion sizes. Some manufacturers are cagey. They will manipulate portion sizes to mask the level of sugar and fat on the nutrition label. A portion might be just half the bar. Therefore, eating the whole thing will double the sugar, fat and calories.



- **PURPOSE**

- Use bars at specific times, especially around exercise. Consuming natural high-quality protein after exercise assists muscle recovery. Digestion of proteins also aids in long-term satiety.



- **PROCESSED**

- Look for simple (pronounceable) ingredients. The fewer the better.
- Avoid sugar substitutes, artificial sweeteners and flavorings.
- Be aware of marketing gimmicks and outlandish claims.



You can't judge every bar by its wrapper.

- In October 2001, when ConsumerLab.com announced the findings of its independent laboratory tests of 30 nutrition bars, 18 did not meet the claims of ingredient levels on the label.
- More than any other misrepresentation, about half of the nutrition bars exceeded the carbohydrate levels stated on the wrapper (one bar promoted as a low-carbohydrate diet product claimed it had just 2 grams of carbohydrates, but testing showed it actually contained 22 grams!).
- EPT subscribes to ConsumerLab and other reliable sources. Are you in doubt about a protein bar? Let us check it out.



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SCAN ME



EPT Pro Tips

1. Aim for 3 to 5 grams of fiber.



2. Look for a bar that's low in fat (less than 5 grams). Especially saturated fat. Completely avoid any with trans fat, hydrogenated or processed oils.

3. Don't fall for diet brands or claims. For example: keto bars may contain significantly more fat, and in particular, saturated fat (often from coconut oil), than other types of bars.

4. Watch out for bars claiming to get their fiber from "tapioca starch". This is mostly starch with little, if any, fiber.

Summary

To enhance flavor, be aware that many bars add sweeteners. This can vary from more natural sweeteners like dates or stevia to unhealthy sweeteners like high fructose corn syrup. While the fat in some protein bars often comes from whole nuts and seeds, others use highly processed plant oils like palm, canola, peanut, or soybean oil.

If you'd like some good suggestions for protein bars or other foods, please speak with your trainer. We're here to help with your diet as well as your exercise routine!



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For her bio, please see

<https://www.elitepersonaltrainingandfitnesssolutions.com/lynette-jernigan>



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